

Remarks at a Rally for Governor Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts in Boston, Massachusetts

October 16, 2010

The President. Hello, Boston! Are you fired up? You ready to go? You know, let me just say, Boston, before I get started, that I've been doing a lot of traveling, I've been campaigning for a lot of folks, and sometimes, you know, you get used to hearing politicians speak, and occasionally, I've got to admit, you're in the back and you're on your BlackBerry or—[laughter]—but when Deval speaks, I listen. I listen.

Massachusetts, it is great to be back. And I just want to say that I am so proud of your leadership here in this State, starting with your senior Senator, one of the outstanding public servants that we have, John Kerry.

Two of the best Members of Congress that I know, Ed Markey and Barney Frank, are in the house; your outstanding mayor, Tom Menino; one of my dearest friends, who has just been so outstanding since we came back, Vicki Kennedy—give Vicki Kennedy a big round of applause. Give it up for James Taylor, Lieutenant Governor Tim Murray, and I am so happy to be standing here with one of the best Governors this State has ever seen, my friend Deval Patrick.

Now, Deval and I, we go back a little ways. So I am a little biased here. But the reason I came today isn't just because Deval has been there for me as a friend, it's because he continues to inspire me as a leader. At a time when too many folks bow to the politics of the moment, he represents the politics of conscience and conviction. In an age of too much cynicism, he has matched unbending optimism with unyielding effort to move Massachusetts forward.

Now, Deval has steered this State through some very turbulent waters. He could have spent his time in office figuring out how to stay there. He could have spent his days looking at the polls and avoiding tough decisions. But you didn't elect him to do what was easy. You elected him to do what was right. And that is exactly what he has done.

Because he chose to invest in job creation, Massachusetts has created jobs faster than any

other State in the Nation. Because he chose to invest in education, your students are first in the Nation. Because he chose to invest in clean energy, Massachusetts leads the Nation in clean energy initiatives and energy efficiency. Because of his dedication to expanding health care, 98 percent of the people in this State are insured. Because Deval Patrick chose to lead in the toughest of times, this State will lead in the future.

And that's why you've got to help him finish the work you all started in 2006. That's why you need him. That's why you need to help guard the change that you helped deliver in 2006, by giving Deval Patrick 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Four more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Now, in a little more than 2 weeks—

Audience members. Fight global AIDS! Fight global AIDS! Fight global AIDS!

The President. In a little more than 2 weeks, you've got a chance to do just that. In 2 weeks—

Audience members. Fight global AIDS! Fight global AIDS! Fight global AIDS!

The President. We're all right. In 2 weeks, we can go 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. All right. In 2 weeks, you can set the direction of this State and this country for the next 2 years. And just like you did in 2006, just like you did again in 2008, you can defy the conventional wisdom, the kind that says, no, you can't. The conventional wisdom says, no, you can't overcome cynicism in our politics. It says, no, you can't overcome the special interests. It says, no, you can't tackle the biggest challenges. But in 2 weeks, you can say, "Yes, we can."

Now, there is no doubt that this is a difficult election. It's difficult here in Massachusetts, it's

difficult all across the country. And that's because we've been through an incredibly difficult time as a nation.

For most of the last decade, middle class families saw their costs rise, their incomes fall. Between 2001 and 2009, the average wage of middle class families went down 5 percent. Between 2001 and 2009, we saw the most sluggish job growth since World War II. Between that period of time, too many jobs disappeared overseas. There were too many parents who couldn't afford to send their kids to college, too many parents who couldn't afford, in some cases, to let their kid see a doctor when they got sick; Americans working two jobs and three jobs just to make ends meet.

And all these problems were compounded by the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, a recession that cost us more than 4 million jobs before I even took the oath of office, 750,000 jobs lost the month I was sworn in, 600,000 the month after that, 600,000 the month after that.

It was a once-in-a-lifetime challenge, a once-in-a-generation challenge. And I hoped, like many of you hoped, that we could have both parties put politics aside for the sake of the country. We all hoped that we could start moving beyond the divisions and the bickering and the game-playing that had dominated Washington for so long, because although we are proud to be Democrats, but we are prouder to be Americans. And so we weren't going to let party labels get in the way of progress.

And I know a lot of Republicans felt the same way all across the country, but the Republican leaders in Washington made a different decision. Because we were climbing out of such a deep hole, they knew that it was going to take time to repair the economy. They knew that you couldn't recover 8 million jobs overnight. Those folks that Deval was talking about, they knew that they were going to be going through struggles and hardships, and that the longer it took, the more frustrated and angry people would get. And so the Republican leadership made a calculation. It was a tactical decision that if they just sat on the sidelines, if they didn't lift a finger to help, if instead they opposed us every

step of the way, if they said no even to policies that historically they had agreed to, that historically they had sponsored and adopted, they figured they could ride people's anger and frustration all the way to the ballot box.

That is what's happened over the last 20 months. So I need all of you to be clear over these next 2 weeks: This election is a choice. And the stakes could not be higher, because if they win this election, the chair of a Republican campaign committee has already promised to pursue the "exact same agenda" as they did before they took office.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That's what they said. The very same agenda that cut taxes for millionaires and billionaires, that cut rules for special interests, that cut middle class families loose to fend for themselves. It's an agenda that turned a record surplus into a record deficit, an agenda that let Wall Street run wild at the expense of folks on Main Street, an agenda that nearly destroyed our economy.

If they take over Congress, the other side has promised to roll back health reform so that insurance companies can go back to denying you coverage before—because you're sick. They want to roll back Wall Street reform so that taxpayers are on the hook for Wall Street bailouts and credit card companies can hit you with hidden fees and penalties.

And if they win in Congress, they will cut AIDS funding right here in the United States of America and all across the world. You know, one of the great things about being a Democrat is we like arguing with each other. [*Laughter*] But I would suggest to the folks who are concerned about AIDS funding, take a look at what the Republican leadership has to say about AIDS funding, because we increased AIDS funding.

They want to cut education by 20 percent to help pay for a \$700 billion tax break that only the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans will ever see.

So that's what's happening at the national level. Here in Massachusetts, it's the same story. Deval's opponents, they've got a very different vision about where this State should go.

They want to let the insurance companies run wild. They want to eliminate unemployment benefits for thousands of people. They want to eliminate investments in education and clean energy. It is the same theory the other side has been peddling for years, and it is up to us to tell them we don't want what they are selling. We've been there, we've tried it, we don't like it, and we're not going back.

I mean, this is not a situation in which we haven't tried it. We tried what they're selling. We tried it for 8 years. It didn't work out so well. You know, I've been using an analogy across the country. Imagine them driving a car into the ditch. And Deval and me and Kerry and Markey and Frank, we've all put our boots on. We went down into the ditch and we started pushing that car out of the ditch.

And it was hot down there, muddy, and we kept on pushing. And every once in a while we'd look up and the Republicans are standing up there, fanning themselves—[laughter]—sipping on a Slurpee. And we'd ask, are you going to help? And they'd say, no, that's all right, but you all should push harder. You're not pushing the right way. [Laughter]

And so even though we got no help from them, even though they didn't lift a finger, we kept on pushing. And finally we've got this car on level ground. It's a little banged up. You know, it needs some bodywork. It needs a tune-up. But it's ready to move forward. And suddenly we get this tap on our shoulder. And we look back and, lo and behold, who is it? It's the Republicans. And they say, excuse me, can we have the keys back?

Massachusetts, they can't have the keys back. They don't know how to drive. They can get in and ride with us if they want, but they got to be in the backseat.

I don't know if any of you have noticed, but if you want to go forward in your car, what do you do? You put it into "D." You want to go backwards you put it into "R." Don't let us go backwards now. That's not a coincidence.

Because of the steps that we've taken—because of the steps we've taken, we no longer face the possibility of a second depression. The economy is growing again. Private sector job

growth, we've seen 9 months in a row. But we still have a long way to go. We've still got a lot of work to do. I know there are people who are still hurting out there. Deval meets them and sees them every day. I see them and hear from them every day. There are families that are still hanging just by a thread. That's what keeps me awake at night. That's what keeps me fighting. That's what keeps Deval fighting.

But we also know this: that the biggest mistake we can make right now is to—is out of hurt and confusion, the worst thing we could do is to go back to the very same policies that caused this mess in the first place. The last thing we can do is go back to a philosophy that nearly destroyed our economy and decimated the middle class. And I say this not because I want to relitigate the past, it's because I don't want to relive the past.

So what this election's about is not where we are right now. It's where we want to be 2 years from now, where we want to be 5 years from now, where we want to be 10 years from now, where we want to be 20 years from now. It's not just about the work we've done, it's about the work we've got left to do. It's about moving forward, not moving backwards, but moving forward between our doubts and our hopes. That's what's at stake right now.

Look, Deval and I have a different idea about what the future holds, and it's an idea rooted in our belief about how this country was built. It's based not just on our reading of history, but our experience in our own lives. We have seen transformation in this country. And we know it didn't all come from government. We know government doesn't have all the answers to our problems. We know government should be lean and efficient.

But in the words of the first Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, we also believe that government should do for the people what they cannot do better for themselves. We believe in a country that rewards hard work. We believe in a country that encourages responsibility. We believe in a country where we look after one another. Where we say, I am my brother's keeper, I am my sister's keeper. That's the America we know. That's the choice in this election.

We see a future that's driven by American innovation and American ingenuity. We don't want to keep giving tax breaks to corporations that ship our jobs overseas.

We want to give tax breaks to companies that are creating jobs right here in Massachusetts, right here in the United States of America, to small businesses, to American manufacturers, to clean energy companies, because I don't want to see all the solar panels and wind turbines and electric cars built in Europe or in Asia. Deval and I want them built right here in America, by American workers. That's the choice in this election.

We see an America where every citizen has the skills and training to compete with any worker in the world. The other side might think it's a good idea to cut education by 20 percent, but you don't think it's a good idea. You know who else doesn't think it's a good idea? China and South Korea and Germany and India, they are boosting education spending, not cutting back. They understand that whoever is able to train their young people will be able to outcompete any other country in the world. Those countries are not playing for second place. And the United States doesn't play for second place. We play for first.

That's why tens of billions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies that used to go to big banks are now going where they should, to students and to families. That's why we want to make our new college tax credit permanent, which will be worth \$10,000 in tuition relief for every student in America. That's the vision we see. That's the future we want, where the middle class is growing, where opportunity is shared, and where the only limit to your success is how hard you're willing to try.

That's why we want tax cuts for the middle class permanent. That's why we'll fight the efforts of some in the other party to privatize Social Security, because as long as I'm President, nobody is going to take the retirement savings of a generation and hand it over to Wall Street. That's why we won't go back to the days when insurance companies and Wall Street banks had free rein to run roughshod over the middle class. We don't want insurance companies drop-

ping you when you get sick or credit card companies hitting you with hidden fees and penalties. We don't want taxpayers ever again to have to pay a bailout for Wall Street's mistakes. That's the choice in this election. That's what we're fighting for.

Now, let me say this, the same special interests that would profit from the other side's agenda, they are fighting back just as hard. To win this election, they are plowing tens of millions of dollars into front groups that are running misleading, negative ads all across America. They don't even have the courage to stand up and disclose their identity. They could be insurance companies, they could be banks, they could be even foreign-controlled corporations. We will never know.

This is not just a threat to Democrats. This is a threat to our democracy. And the only way to fight it, the only way to match their millions of dollars, is with millions of voices who are ready to start—who are ready to finish what we started in 2008. Only you can make a difference. Only you can roll back these efforts.

Look, let me say this, Massachusetts. This will be the largest get out the vote operation in the history of this State, but only if you do your part. We need all of you to sign one of the cards they're handing out. We need all of you to text the letters "GOTV" to the number 89800. It's on those signs. Lift one of those signs up right there. I don't even mind if you do it right now. Like I said, my staff is probably BlackBerrying right now in the back; they're not listening to my speech.

But the reason this is important is because a lot of you got involved in 2006 and 2008 because you believed that we're in a defining moment in our history. You believed this is a time when the decisions we make about the challenges we face, they're not just going to affect us; they're going to affect the lives of our children and our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren. They'll affect the trajectory of this country for decades to come. And the reason you knocked on doors and made phone calls and waited in line to cast your vote for Deval, for me—some of you for the very first time in your lives—was because you believed that your

actions could make a difference, that you could play a role in making big change, that history was not predestined, that you could shape history.

Now we're in the midst of not just advocating for change, not just calling for change. We're doing the grinding, sometimes frustrating work of delivering change, inch by inch, day by day.

And Massachusetts, we know it's not easy. I know it's not easy. I know sometimes you think about election night or Inauguration Day when Beyonce was singing and Bono was singing and that was so much fun and you were feeling good and you think, well, gosh, I wish politics was that easy all the time. *[Laughter]*

I understand that sometimes hope may have faded as we've grinded out this work over the last several years. I know it's hard to keep faith when a family member still hasn't found a job after months of trying or another foreclosure sign is hung on the house down the street. And you're watching TV and all you see are politicians tearing each other down and pundits who treat politics like a sport. I know it can be discouraging.

But don't ever let anybody tell you this fight isn't worth it. Don't ever let them tell you you're not making a difference. Because of you, there is a woman in New Hampshire right now who no longer has to choose between losing her house and treating her cancer. Because of you, there are parents who can look their children in the eye and tell them, you're going to college. Because of you, there are small-business owners who can keep their doors open. Because of you, there are clean energy entrepreneurs right here

in Massachusetts who are hanging out the help wanted signs; they want to hire some folks. Because of you, there are 100,000 brave men and women who are no longer at war in Iraq. Don't let them tell you that change isn't possible. Don't let them take this country backwards because we did not have the conviction to fight.

Because here's what I know: If our parents and our grandparents and our great-grandparents had made the same decision 50 years ago or 100 years ago, we wouldn't be here tonight. The only reason we're here is because past generations have been unafraid to push forward, even in the face of difficulty, to do what was necessary, even when success was uncertain.

That's how we came through war. That's how we came through depression. That's why we've got civil rights. That's why we've got workers' rights. That's why we've got women's rights. That's the spirit that we need now. And if you have that spirit, I guarantee you, we will reelect Deval Patrick. We will win in November. And all of us together will rebuild the middle class and restore the American Dream.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:45 p.m. at the Hynes Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to musicians James Taylor, Beyonce G. Knowles, and Paul D. "Bono" Hewson; Victoria R. Kennedy, wife of the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy; and Rep. Pete Sessions, in his capacity as chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Reception in West Newton, Massachusetts

October 16, 2010

Thank you very much. Well, first of all, to Ralph and Wing, thank you for opening up this extraordinary home, and we will not show up unannounced—*[laughter]*—whatever John may say. You guys have been extraordinarily gracious, and we really appreciate it.

To all of you who are here, thank you for being such stalwart supporters not just to the Democratic Party, but supporters of an idea about how America should be organized to make sure that everybody has an opportunity. There are core values that all of you stand for, and that's the reason that you're here today.